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FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6921  
INFO RUEHBE/AMEMBASSY BELMOPAN IMMEDIATE 0070  
RUEHGT/AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA IMMEDIATE 3940  
RUEHMU/AMEMBASSY MANAGUA IMMEDIATE 2682  
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE 1318  
RUEHSJ/AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE IMMEDIATE 3432  
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA IMMEDIATE 0091  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J5 MIAMI FL IMMEDIATE  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/02/2017  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [CU](#) [NI](#) [HN](#)  
SUBJECT: HONDURAN PRESIDENT ZELAYA'S TRIP TO CUBA OCTOBER 9

Classified By: Charge d'affaires, Jim Williard, reasons 1.4 (b and d)

11. (C) Summary: On October 9, Honduran President Zelaya will travel to Cuba to sign a maritime delimitation treaty with the GOC. FM Milton Jimenez told Polcouns on October 2 that the President chose to travel October 9 instead of October 8 because they did not want to be manipulated into participating in local "Che Guevara Day" celebrations in Havana. Jimenez said that twice he has raised with Cuban FM Perez Roque the idea of Honduras serving as an informal channel of communication between the USG and GOC, and would be willing to ask Perez Roque again following the conclusion of the negotiations. Jimenez also said that after the negotiations are concluded, he would be willing to reconsider the role the Honduran Embassy plays in Havana, and possibly consider being more open to civil society. End Summary.

12. (C) On October 2, Honduran FM Milton Jimenez invited new Polcouns to his office for a courtesy call, but the main topic of conversation centered on Cuba. Jimenez told us that although he was a leftist as a University student, he is not a communist, and does not like what is going on in Cuba today. He recounted that he had traveled to Cuba as a young man for tourism, and then once again as a government representative, but only to official meetings, and admitted he had never seen the "real Cuba." Jimenez told us that President Zelaya will travel to Cuba on October 9 to engage in maritime border discussions with the GOC, and was very pleased that in his last meeting with A/S Shannon, Shannon had expressed his understanding that the trip was necessary. Jimenez told us Zelaya will travel on October 9 instead of October 8, as announced, because the International Court of Justice decision on the Maritime border dispute between Honduras and Nicaragua will be handed down on the October 8, and he does not want to be in Cuba when it is handed down. He would like to be with Ortega when the decision is announced, so that they can shake hands and present a civilized demeanor to their people. But the real reason, he confided, that Zelaya will not travel to Cuba on October 8, is that they discovered it is "Che Guevara Day" in Cuba, and they did not want to be forced into participating in local celebrations or otherwise have their presence manipulated by the Cuban government.

13. (C) Jimenez said that in previous meetings with Cuban FM

Perez Roque, he has raised the possibility of Honduras serving as a channel of communication between the USG and GOC. Perez apparently did not discount the idea, and seemed amenable to considering the proposal. Following the signing of the delimitation treaty, Jimenez said he would like to present the idea to Perez again. Jimenez also said the GOH would be reevaluating the role their Embassy plays in Cuba once the deal is signed. Polcouns said this reevaluation would be positively received in Washington, and suggested they could consider being more open to meeting with civil society. Jimenez agreed this was a good idea.

14. (C) Comment: The FM is trying desperately to rebuild strained relations, as the Zelaya administration had been increasingly isolating itself in recent months. Zelaya told the Ambassador in late September that he would like to re-start their weekly meetings, and now the FM is reaching out to the newly arrived Polcouns. The expressed openness to "reevaluating" their Embassy's mission in Havana is a first, and USINT should consider getting to know the Honduran representative after the negotiations are completed. Post requests Washington guidance on whether to pursue the GOH invitation to serve as a channel of communication with the GOC.

WILLIARD